

## Montana Legislative Update – Week of April 7, 2019

HB385 Authorize blackjack to be played in licensed establishments) Had a hearing in the Senate Business, Labor and Economic Affairs Committee on Friday, April 5th. As originally presented in House Taxation, the bill had nothing to do with fire or emergency services. However, an amendment was presented that would use a portion of the 5% tax on live blackjack tables to fund \$250,000 per year for assistance to volunteer firefighters to help with workers compensation premiums. The Montana Fire Alliance supports the bill.

SB171 (Generally revise laws related to firefighters) Passed out of the House Business and Labor Committee 19-0 on Wednesday, April 3rd and then passed 2nd reading on the House floor 84-15. It is scheduled for a 3rd and final reading on Monday, April 8th. The bill would require that all paid firefighters hired after January 1, 2020 be tobacco-free. In addition, it says that "A paid or volunteer firefighter may not use tobacco products while engaged in firefighting work, on firefighting equipment, while attending any firefighting training, or on any worksite while engaging in firefighting duties". The Montana Fire Alliance is watching the bill.

SB160 Provide workers' compensation for presumptive diseases of firefighters) Passed 2nd reading in the House 95-5 on Friday, April 5th. The bill would create a presumption under workers' compensation for certain diseases associated with firefighting activities. It would automatically cover firefighters who are required to have work comp coverage under state statute. It would be optional for volunteer firefighters, who are not required to be covered by work comp, subject to the insurer agreeing to provide presumptive coverage. The Montana Fire Alliance is watching the bill.

SB38 (Allow emergency care providers to offer community health care) Passed 2nd and 3rd readings on the House floor last week and has been sent back to the Senate for concurrence votes on the bill as amended in the House. It would allow emergency care providers to be involved in community-integrated health care services under the regulation of the Board of Medical Examiners. The Montana Fire Alliance supports the bill.

Hearings and issues this upcoming week:

We continue to watch for a hearing in the House on **SB29** (Require workers' comp for all volunteer firefighters). It has been waiting for a hearing since passing the Senate on January 29th.

To follow the Montana Fire Alliance's watch list go to [www.mtfirealliance.org](http://www.mtfirealliance.org)

Respectfully Submitted  
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Montana Fire Alliance - Legislative Liaison